

## ***FWP COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET***

**Meeting Date:** February 16, 2012

**Agenda Item:** 2012 Wolf Management Harvest

**Division:** Fish & Wildlife

**Action Needed:** Approval of Final Rule

**Time Needed for Presentation:** 20 minutes

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### **Background**

For 2011, the FWP Commission adopted a statewide quota of 220 and created an additional Wolf Management Unit (250) in the Bitterroot Valley. Modeling predicts the statewide quota will result in a 25 percent reduction from the 2010 minimum of 566 to an estimated 425. A competing model predicts a seven percent decline. The quota in WMU 250 is 18 wolves, but as of December 23, 2011 only three have been harvested.

As a refinement to the July 2011 adoption, in December the commission extended wolf hunting through Feb. 15. Given the history of wolf management and elk population concerns in WMU 250—to include the pursuit a Federal 10j proposal in 2010 to remove wolves in the West Fork of the Bitterroot (deer/elk Hunting District 250) based upon concerns of impacts to elk populations by wolves and the current low wolf harvest in WMU 250—this proposal further extends wolf hunting without a hunter orange requirement as currently defined in WMU 250 through April 1, 2012 or until the quota of 18 wolves is met, whichever is first.

### **Public Involvement Process & Results**

Public comment will run through 5 p.m. Feb.13 with comments forwarded to the Commission. Any final adoption will take place Feb. 16. Given the open public comment period at the time of this writing, elements of this proposal may change.

### **Alternatives and Analysis**

This proposal addresses potential for wolf harvest through Feb. 15 to be less than the described quota of 18. Possible alternatives include the status quo Feb. 15 ending date, an April 1 ending date for WMU 250, or an April 1 ending date for all other WMUs statewide where the quota has not been reached.

### **Agency Recommendation & Rationale**

The proposal is aligned with known biology, management history and survey efforts and sits within the wide spectrum of public comment.

### **Proposed Motion**

I move to allow management harvest of wolves by hunters in WMU 250 through April 1, 2012 as presented by FWP.